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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Friday, March 15, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "END-OF-WINTER HOT DISHES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,  
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today I've got some cooking tips for those of you who want to put a touch of spring into your meal-planning. Of course, it isn't time yet for picnic-style meals--but I've got some ideas for hot main dishes that you may have been neglecting lately.

These dishes that I'm going to tell you about make use of four chief ingredients...eggs--cheese--fish--and nuts. Each one of these is a good substantial food, suitable for a main dish for dinner, lunch, or supper. Eggs are down in price now, so it's a good time to plan meals around them. Cheese is another favorite that will bring variety into meals at low cost. Fish suggests several unusual dishes--and both the fresh and canned fish is available in many places. Nuts, too, offer a pleasant surprise when they appear in the main dish--for either the noon or the evening meal. And this season peanuts, walnuts, and pecans are especially abundant.

Now as to how we are going to use these foods in main dishes....Well, one good egg dish is a fluffy, golden-brown souffle. Or, if you're in a hurry, you'll find that an omelet is another good way to use eggs. And to make the souffle or omelet really worthy of its ranking as a main dish...add some grated cheese--flaked fish--vegetable pulp--or ground meat.

Croquettes are another suggestion...they're especially good for a hot luncheon dish--or to head the dinner menu. You can make the croquettes with chopped nuts--canned fish--fresh fish--eggs--or cheese. Or, if you'd rather not bother with deep-fat frying--you can use fish or nuts in a baked loaf.



Now when it comes to making these dishes--here's what the cooking experts in

the Federal Bureau of Home Economics say about scuffles ....

"Eggs are the chief ingredient for any kind of a souffle. And for the binder...you can use either a thick white sauce--or bread crumbs--or both. But if you want to be absolutely sure that the souffle will hold up--it's best to use some bread crumbs.

"Probably the most popular flavoring for a souffle is cheese. In making a cheese souffle--use well-aged cheese and grate or shave it into thin slices. Add it to the hot milk mixture and stir until the cheese has melted. Add this to the well-beaten egg yolks. Season and fold the yolk mixture into the stiffly-beaten egg whites. (This folding process has to be done very carefully...and don't try to break up every lump of the beaten whites--you'll break up too many air bubbles that are needed for leavening. Small lumps of egg white will "bake out" as your souffle cooks.)

"When you use flaked fish or vegetable pulp in a souffle--add it to the hot milk mixture, just like the cheese.

"One of the secrets of making a perfect souffle is long, slow cooking. You need a very moderate oven to get the bubbles in the egg white to expand--and all the mixture to set without becoming tough. There's no danger that your souffle will fall if it's made with bread crumbs as a binder and is baked in a very moderate oven. But a souffle is always best when served as soon as it comes from the oven."

Omelets are considered the pride of many a famous French chef--but they're simple enough to make at home. The Bureau of Home Economics suggests that you use one or two eggs for each person--with one tablespoon of milk or water for each egg--and salt to taste.

"To make a fluffy omelet--separate the eggs. Beat the yolks--add the liquid--and fold into the stiffly-beaten egg whites. To make a flat omelet--beat the whole egg (instead of separating them) and then add the liquid and salt. Pour this



mixture into a hot, greased frying pan and start cooking it on top of the stove over a moderate heat. Again the emphasis is on moderate heat.

"One method of cooking an omelet--is to cover the pan and let the egg mixture cook in its own steam. Or, if you like, leave the pan uncovered and when the bottom of the omelet is slightly brown--brown the top in a moderate oven for 10 minutes. (That's an oven of about 350 degrees F.) Or, continue cooking it on top of the stove until the mixture sets-- and then brown the top under a low broiler flame for 2 or 3 minutes.

"For a change, add grated cheese or cooked vegetables to the omelet mixture before you cook it. Or, spread them over half of the cooked omelet. Then fold the omelet and turn it onto a hot platter for serving. And another good idea is to spread the omelet with jelly before folding.

Croquettes and loaves offer other suggestions for main dishes that are a little "different." For the binder in a croquette mixture...use a thick white sauce--rice--potatoes--bean pulp--or a cereal. Use originality in seasoning...and for variation try adding chopped hard-cooked egg--nuts--grated cheese--cooked fresh fish--or canned fish.

"The standard mixture for a nut loaf includes (in addition to the ground or chopped nuts) chopped vegetables--a cereal or bread crumbs--and a thick sauce for binder. To give the loaf a good texture, the clever cook will see that at least one of the vegetables is celery--green pepper--or carrots.

"Fish loaves are made in much the same way as nut loaves. And you can use almost any fresh or canned fish--but salmon and tuna are special favorites."

That's all the main-dish suggestions we have time for today. But, as the weather gets warmer, we'll have more cooking tips to suit the season.

